



**Meeting:** Downtown Citizen Steering Committee Meeting #7

**Date:** October 17, 2013

**Time:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Associated Bank, 6<sup>th</sup> floor Conference Room

---

*Last Updated On: October 21, 2013*

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **1) Call to Order**

C. Niles called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

### **2) Approval of September 19, 2013, Meeting Summary**

A motion was made by G. Spevacek and seconded by C. Mills to approve the summary of the September 19, 2013 meeting. Motion carried.

### **3) Review Results of October 16 Public Workshop**

The project team reported that attendance at yesterday's public workshop was lower than the two previous events, but much feedback was gathered nonetheless. Forty-nine people signed in, and a total of 50 to 60 people were present. D. Grove presented an initial report of the results of the workshop. Not all written comments have been compiled yet. A complete report will be made available in the coming days.

Tabulation of the 37 ballots completed showed the strongest support for the following concept plans as being of "High Importance":

- Walnut Street Bridge Enhancements
- Downtown Core – Pine Street Extension
- Washington Street Protected Bike Lanes
- Shoreline Enhancements

The next tier of concept plans that also garnered a majority of "High Importance" include:

- Larsen Green Residential Neighborhood
- One-way to Two-way Street Conversions
- Neighborhood Infill with Townhomes
- Monroe Corridor
- Walnut Street Road Diet

Several other concepts had a majority of ballots indicate "Medium Priority," and only the Washington Street Angle Parking concept was ranked by most as a "Low Priority." None of the concepts were completely rejected which would have been indicated by a majority of participants selecting "Not At All."

### **4) Discuss Development/Redevelopment Opportunities**

The Steering Committee reviewed each of the development concepts in depth. The following were main points of discussion relative to the Downtown Core concepts:

- The project team has only been able to talk with major property owners at this stage of the planning process. For the concepts that advance in the process as being top priorities, more discussion with potentially involved property owners will be essential.

- The impact on parking with each of these alternatives was discussed. The Pine Street Extension option provided the most parking. The Town Square concept replaces some, but not all of the surface parking with on-street parking.
- A plaza will help keep people in the downtown longer as it would create another option for multiple purpose trips.
- There will continue to be a need to have a variety of parking types in the downtown. Parking convenient to shops and restaurants will always be needed and should be time-limited to keep them available for customers.
- The Pine Street Extension alternative is an exciting vision but definitely more challenging than the Town Square alternative. Perhaps both will be included in the plan in some way.

The following were main points of discussion relative to the Larsen Green concepts:

- Perhaps there is an acceptable way to accommodate a large format retailer on this site.
- A mid-size retailer (30 to 50,000 square feet) could be incorporated into a mixed-use scenario for this site. Such a retailer could help meet the need for a grocery store without consuming the entire site.
- Having residential uses along the railroad tracks could be a conflict. The views to the north and east (warehouses and lime yards) are also challenging here.
- None of these concepts accounts for the location of the high tension power lines that dissect the site. The cost of moving these utilities is substantial.
- The possibility of moving the museum and/or library seems like a stretch. As non-taxed entities, this might not be a good use of funds that should stimulate private investment and tax-base growth.
- Addressing the west side of the Broadway corridor would be essential in attracting investment on this site. The quality and density of land uses need improvement.
- Plans for this site will be impacted based on whether the potential Walmart proposal becomes a reality.

The following were main points of discussion relative to the Monroe Avenue concepts:

- Could the Bodart Street corridor ever become an ethnic village? Communication with the current property owners would be essential, and it would need grass-roots initiation.
- The character and positioning of the Monroe corridor lends itself to a mix of automobile and pedestrian serving businesses.
- Downtown residents on the Steering Committee believe they would walk from their homes to a grocery store or market on Monroe. It would be an acceptable walking distance.
- It could take time to make these kinds of changes based on expected market absorption rates; however, a plan must be in place to guide and respond to future proposals.
- There could be potential land uses beyond the typical office, retail, and residential to help drive development here. Examples are a secure testing facility or start-up, entrepreneurial spaces.

Relative to the Broadway Parking concept, it was noted that despite the lower priority ranking identified so far, it is the number one issue amongst business owners in that district. Relative to the Downtown Infill concept, the appropriateness of townhomes in the downtown core was questioned. This may not be a fit in all locations. Regarding the Shoreline Enhancements concept, it was noted that this is more likely to succeed than a marina because of the connectivity to activated places. The

concept is showing something different than boat storage. The example of the spike in transient boat traffic at the CityDeck was cited.

The following were main points of discussion relative to the various street improvement concepts:

- Getting bicycles to use the streets instead of the sidewalks continues to be an important need in the downtown.
- The accommodation of bicycles on Washington Street versus on the Fox River Trail was discussed. The trail environment within the downtown was created for a unique purpose and has high usage by pedestrians. Bicycle commuting is not a good mix with that environment, so the parallel route is essential. The trail surface could be improved for roller-blading and bicycling, but this will not reduce the potential for pedestrian versus bicycle conflicts.
- The appropriateness of bicycle features in cold weather climates was discussed. It was noted that Chicago, Minneapolis, Madison, and Boston are ranked among the most bikable cities in the US.

**5) *State of the Downtown Report***

City staff provided an update on the State of the Downtown report. Work continues on the background data documentation. The goal is to have the draft sent to the Steering Committee members at least one week prior to the November meeting.

**6) *Discuss Next Steps in the Planning Process***

The project team explained that the next steps in the process include continuing to obtain community input on the materials from the public workshop and working toward a prioritization of the various real estate development and public realm improvement concepts. This will involve a degree of feasibility analysis and setting general timelines for possible implementation. Also in development at this time are vision and goal statements, various plan recommendations, and implementation strategies. The fourth and final public workshop will present these items for feedback in early to mid December.

**7) *Set Next Meeting***

The Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month, so the next meeting will be November 21<sup>st</sup> at Associated Bank at 6:00 p.m.

**8) *Public Comment***

There were no public comments in addition to the discussion of the Citizen Steering Committee on the agenda items.

**9) *Adjourn***

C. Niles adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

**Meeting Attendees**      Present, Excused, Absent

<u>E</u>	Alex Galt	<u>P</u>	Ian Griffiths
<u>A</u>	Brent Weycker	<u>A</u>	Jamie Blom
<u>P</u>	Carol Karls	<u>P</u>	Jeff Mirkes
<u>P</u>	Chris Naumann	<u>P</u>	Lawrence Ferry
<u>P</u>	Chris Niles	<u>E</u>	Mayor Jim Schmitt
<u>E</u>	Chuck Lamine	<u>P</u>	Miriah Kelley
<u>P</u>	Cindy Mills	<u>A</u>	Nicole Zich
<u>E</u>	Dan Moore	<u>E</u>	Rob Byrne
<u>P</u>	Ald. Dave Boyce	<u>E</u>	Scott Dettman
<u>P</u>	Glenn Spevacek	<u>E</u>	Tim Duckett
<u>P</u>	Heather Mueller	<u>P</u>	Tina Quigley

**Support Team**

Nic Sparacio, Planning Department  
 Neil White, Economic Development Department  
 Daniel Grove, Lakota Group

**Others Present**

Bill Meindl